

Press Release
UTBB Applauds Anglo American Withdrawal from Pebble Project
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For Immediate Release:

BRISTOL BAY, ALASKA – The United Tribes of Bristol Bay today called again on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to use its authority under the Clean Water Act to prevent foreign mining companies from digging North America’s largest open-pit mine in the heart of Bristol Bay’s salmon habitat. It’s no surprise the renewed push comes in the wake of Anglo American withdrawing its investment in the Pebble Project after 98% of the public comments received from Bristol Bay residents voicing their opposition to the Pebble Mine during EPA’s public comment period on its assessment of the mine’s impact on the Bristol Bay watershed.

“We are glad Anglo American has finally recognized developing Pebble is just too risky in Bristol Bay and pulled out of the Pebble Partnership,” said Robert Heyano President of UTBB. “We’ve known this mine would destroy some of the most productive salmon streams in the world & therefore the indigenous cultures who have depended on salmon since time immemorial. At the same time we can’t pass this uncertainty down to our children and grandchildren. Over 98% of local residents who commented on EPA’s recent Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment supported EPA action to protect Bristol Bay, and EPA should act now to make sure that regardless of the desires of foreign mining companies our salmon remain healthy and protected.”

In numbers released today, nearly 75% of the over 895,000 comments supported the EPA’s assessment, which detailed the risks associated with large-scale hard rock mining in the region. The comments coming from Alaska provided even stronger support for the assessment, with over 84% (or nearly 5,000) of comments supporting the EPA protecting Bristol Bay.

The United Tribes of Bristol Bay (UTBB) is a tribal consortium of Bristol Bay’s federally recognized tribal-governments, working to protect Bristol Bay from large-scale sulfide mining. UTBB’s member tribes include the nine tribes who, in 2010, requested EPA use their 404(c) authority under the Clean Water Act to protect Bristol Bay from the potential Pebble Mine—a massive deposit of gold, copper, and molybdenum at the headwaters of two of the most productive salmon rivers in Bristol Bay.

“With Anglo American’s withdrawal & such strong support from Bristol Bay, Alaska, and the nation the time for EPA to act is now,” said UTBB Secretary Thomas Tilden, “We have to ensure our Yup’ik, Denai’na, and Aleut ways of life will live on for future generations and EPA invoking their 404(c) authority to protect our salmon will help make our cultural survival a reality.”

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